

INSIDE...

'CELEBRATE NC PARKS'	P. 2
SCIENCE PROJECTS	P. 4
BIG TURTLE YEAR	P. 5
CARVERS CREEK PLAN	P. 8
NEW RANGERS	P.11

www.ncparks.gov for State Parks Info and Events

Beverly Eaves Perdue
Governor

October, 2010

Volume 24 Number 4

Dee Freeman
Secretary, DENR

LAKE JAMES OPENS PADDY'S CREEK AREA

Lake James State Park dedicated the first public facilities on a 2,915-acre tract that will essentially become the main attraction for the 23-year-old park in Burke County.

The dedication Sept. 17 was symbolic of conservation, grassroots potential and nonpartisan political success for more than 100 local residents and officials who attended.

"Landscapes like this motivate people. These are landscapes that people grew up with," said Susie Hamrick Jones of the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina. "There are places that we simply shouldn't build on, places that should be held in the public trust. This is one of those places."

Many in the crowd were still celebrating the 2004 acquisition of the property from Crescent Resources Inc., a purchase that expanded the state park to six times its former size and protected more than 30 miles of shoreline.



AERIAL VIEW OF LAKE JAMES BATHHOUSE COMPLEX.

It was also a partnership effort that came after years of negotiations, petitions and lobbying efforts involving a citizens group, the conservancy, the state parks system, the legislative delega-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

CARVERS CREEK OFFERS PREVIEW

Visitors who got a "sneak preview" of the developing Carvers Creek State Park at Long Valley Farm Oct. 3 seemed to be as taken with the land as James Stillman Rockefeller, who had carved his homeplace in its longleaf pine forest.

About 200 people walked around the 100-acre pond, gazed into the cypress swamp and poured through his eccentric, 1930s-era home

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

NEW VISITOR CENTER ADDS TO RAVEN ROCK

A new visitor center at Raven Rock State Park in Harnett County was dedicated July 17 and seemed to fulfill everyone's expectations.

"When I saw the plans for this, I said, 'Man, I cannot believe this is happening in Harnett County,'" said Tony Wilder, a county administrator and a member of the park advisory committee.

"A great facility in a great park in a great state," said

Bill Ross, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority and former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Ross said that even a brief exploration of the 4,694-acre park would convince a visitor that it was not overstatement.

The 7,190-square-foot facility is the 20th visitor center built in state parks and state

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

FIRST GENTLEMAN CELEBRATES PARKS

MORE THAN 100 INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS SCHEDULED

"We're celebrating North Carolina today," Park Superintendent Neill Lee reminded his group in the middle of a two-hour interpretive program.

The three adults and three teenagers navigating kayaks down the Lumber River on a hot July morning all agreed that it was the very best way to

celebrate.

Lee's guided tour of the scenic river was one of more than 100 interpretive programs held by park rangers and associates during the "Celebrate North Carolina State Parks" weekend July 23-25, an event staged in cooperation with the office of First Gentleman Bob

Eaves and the Department of Cultural Resources.

The system's education and interpretation program, under Sean Higgins, had pledged interpretive programs for each of the 39 state parks and state recreation areas during the three days, and rangers stretched their imaginations for some unique events.

Besides the usual ranger-led hikes and nature studies, topics included wilderness camping, birds of prey, archaeology, endangered species, carnivorous plants and Appalachian folk remedies.

There were fishing clinics, Civil war demonstrations, kite workshops, storytelling sessions and a clinic on camping in bear country.

One of the busiest parks was Mount Mitchell, where more than 200 visitors attended a slate of programs that included a falconry demonstration and a bluegrass performance.

Evening programs were popular during a weekend that saw record high temperatures across the state. At Stone Mountain State Park, 29 visitors took part in an after-dusk "owl prowl."

The theme of the weekend was "Take a Closer Look" at the state's natural resources. The Department of Cultural Resources provided several hundred shirtpocket magnifiers to give away to people who attended interpretive programs.

Bob Eaves, the husband of Gov. Bev Perdue, launched the Celebrate North Carolina

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

From The Director's Desk

It appears that this is the season for celebration in the state parks. About 100 people turned out to celebrate the dedication of new facilities at Lake James State Park and almost as many came to enjoy the opening of a new visitor center at Raven Rock. More than 200 appeared at our celebration of the donation of Long Valley Farm in the developing Carvers Creek State Park.

This mood of celebration even reached the governor's office and family. First Gentleman Bob Eaves, husband of Gov. Bev Perdue, declared the last weekend in July as a time to "Celebrate NC Parks" as part of his campaign to promote all the good things the Old North State has to offer. We held interpretive programs in every state park that weekend and they were well attended.

The Sandhills Conservation Partnership celebrated 10 years of work – including the conservation of more than 25,000 acres in that land of the longleaf pine and the endangered red cockaded woodpecker. We're proud to be a part of that partnership which has even greater ambitions in mind.

Elsewhere in the state parks system, Eno River celebrated its wealth of migratory birds, Hammocks Beach celebrated a banner year in turtle conservation and Medoc Mountain, with an open house, just celebrated being a part of the community in Halifax County. We also took a few moments to celebrate the long state park careers of retiring Park Superintendent Lyndon Sutton and Facilities Engineer Alan Jeffreys.

It's always a good idea to take a little time to celebrate achievements and milestones and to thank each other for hard work. Sometimes that's a little harder to do when times are tough – and these times certainly are – but that, perhaps, is when we need it most.

Sincerely,



Lewis Ledford



A FALCONRY PROGRAM AT MOUNT MITCHELL, ABOVE, A KAYAK TOUR OF THE LUMBER RIVER, RIGHT, AND AN EXPLORATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURE AT MOUNT JEFFERSON, BELOW, ALL WERE CELEBRATE NC EVENTS.



CELEBRATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

initiative as an ongoing exploration of what makes North Carolina unique – the state's natural history, recreation, music, crafts, literature and arts.

"We have a rich heritage, an exciting cultural life, and an abundance of ways to have fun, so each season we celebrate another facet," Eaves said.

"The park ranger interpretive programs are a vital part of the state park experience in North Carolina and a cornerstone of the commitment to environmental education."

Interpretive programs in the state parks are continuously scheduled throughout the year. Most are free although some require advance registration. Each year, more than 250,000 visitors take the opportunity to learn more about a region's natural and cultural resources through the educational events.



'PARK' IT

WITH A STATE PARKS
SPECIALTY LICENSE TAG

The Division of Motor Vehicles is accepting applications and payment for these special license plates. There is a \$30 fee in addition to regular license fees (\$60 for personalized plates). Additional fees support conservation through the Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds.

Information at www.ncparks.gov
or www.ncdot.org/dmv



PARKS PARTNER FOR SCIENCE PROJECT

The state parks system was involved this summer in a unique pilot program to introduce Hispanic schoolchildren to the sciences, supported by a grant from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund.

In June and July, 16 seventh and eighth graders investigated water quality at four state parks in the Triangle area under the tutelage of park rangers and the Society of Hispanic Professionals.

The students explored food webs by observing zooplankton at Jordan Lake and Falls Lake state recreation area and sampled aquatic macroinvertebrates at Eno River State Park as part of the park’s Living Waters curriculum.

The group saw the effects of sediment pollution and aquatic invasive species while canoeing at William B. Umstead State Park.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a majority of Hispanic students score below standard in the sciences. The fact that they are underrepresented in science careers has been attributed to a lack of science role models and a lack of hands-on science experiences.

To try to reverse that trend, the Society of Hispanic Professionals contacted the division’s interpretation and education program to design a summer science enrichment camp for Hispanic middle school students, and the Good Stewards of the Environment program was launched.

Ana Rodriguez, the director of this new program, also submitted a science enrichment grant application with the division’s support.

Park rangers and education specialists led lessons in the parks while teachers from the



HISPANIC STUDENTS GET HANDS-ON SCIENCE EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE PROGRAM.

society coordinated the program and led pre- and post-visit lessons.

Thanks to the generous support of the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, the Good Stewards of the Environment program has been awarded \$158,240 to build on this year’s success.

During the next three years, 90 students will conduct scientific investigations in state parks from Eno River to Hammocks Beach.

A CALL TO ARMS AT FORT FISHER

FORT FISHER STATE RECREATION AREA RECENTLY HELD A SAND SCULPTURE CONTEST WITH PARK RANGERS AS THE JUDGES. THE WINNER WAS THIS GIGANTIC OCTOPUS CRAFTED BY THE SCOUTS OF TROOP 226 IN WILMINGTON.



PATI VISIT PART OF ACTIVE TURTLE YEAR

At last look, Pati was still bobbing about in the Atlantic Ocean just a few miles south of Hammocks Beach State Park.

She doesn’t yet have a Facebook page, but her friends know this because Pati, a female loggerhead sea turtle, wears a tiny GPS transmitter on her broad back. Her float plan is plotted almost daily on the SEATURTLE.ORG website and will soon be part of a display in the park’s visitor center.

Pati lumbered ashore on Bear Island in the park on July 21. She didn’t nest and lay eggs that night – what researchers consider a “false crawl” – but she was intercepted by a Wildlife Resources Commission biologist and students from the Duke University Marine Laboratory, who epoxied the GPS device to her carapace.

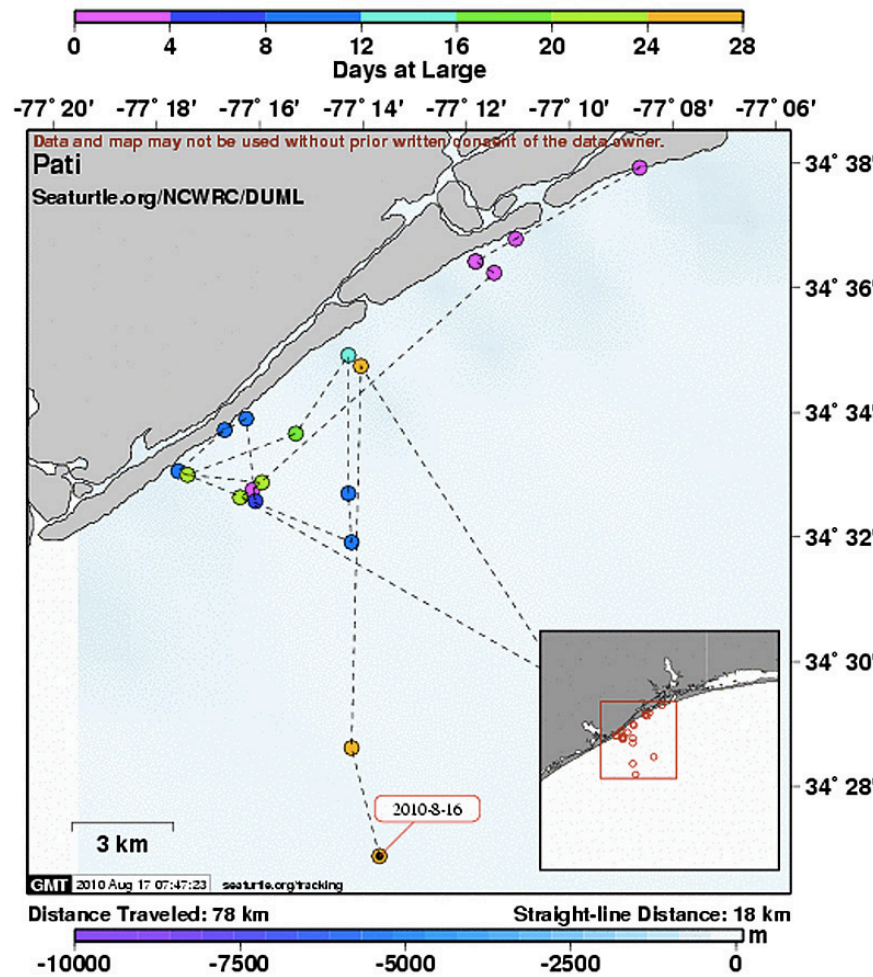
It took about an hour and by 11 p.m., Pati was back in the water. She landed at adjacent Brown’s Island the next night to lay eggs.

After her visit, the Friends of Hammocks and Bear Island adopted Pati, essentially a contract to help pay for her electronic gear.

Pati’s web presence (she was named after one of the Duke students) was one highlight of an active year for sea turtle reproduction and research at the coastal park.

State park rangers and volunteers monitored 19 sea turtle nests in 2010. That’s up significantly from the eight nests recorded in 2009, but the nest numbers often fluctuate.

While endangered loggerhead turtles regularly nest on Bear Island, rangers have determined that one of the



GPS SYSTEM TRACKS PATI’S OCEAN MOVEMENTS IN REAL TIME.



nests was created by the relatively rare green sea turtle, one of only nine green sea turtle nests in coastal North Carolina this year.

The first loggerhead nest hatch was on Aug. 12, a sight witnessed by Ranger Sarah Bauknight on a mid-morning patrol.

“I thought at first it

was just a ghost crab hole and stopped and got out,” Bauknight said. “Suddenly, there were hatchlings everywhere.”

Bear Island figures prominently in the work of SEATURTLE.ORG and other research organizations. Hammocks Beach State Park has one of the oldest sea turtle nest monitoring programs in North Carolina dating from 1975, with nightly patrols to measure and tag nesting females.

Both loggerhead and green sea turtles dig nests above the high tide line along beaches with incubation periods of roughly 60-90 days. Emerging hatchlings make

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

TURTLES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

their way toward the brightest horizon, which on an undeveloped beach is usually toward the sea. Bright, artificial lights can confuse the hatchlings.

SEATURTLE.ORG has launched a program to let park fans “adopt” nests at Hammocks Beach, another way to raise funds for active research.

Bauknight said that in yet another innovative program, researchers at the University of Georgia are taking DNA samples from one egg from each nest recorded on the eastern U.S. Coast.

Over time, nests can be attributed to specific females, providing vital information on mating habits, maturity and lifespan.

Only a handful of turtles are chosen each season to wear the GPS transmitters, which generally last about a year before batteries die or the device fails.

Since the program began in 2003, loggerheads have sent signals from as far north as the New Jersey shore and south as far as the Bahamas and Florida Keys.

Recent studies suggest that rising temperatures in Florida may threaten loggerhead reproduction there, and that the northern subpopulation (from Georgia to N.C.) may represent a buffer against potential climate change.

Because it signals only when she’s at or near the surface, Pati’s GPS device gives researchers clues about the amount of time sea turtles spend diving and foraging and the length and depth of the dives.



BIRDWATCHING HIKES REVEALED MORE THAN 50 SPECIES AT THE PARK.

ENO RIVER LAUNCHES MIGRATORY BIRD FESTIVAL

The first-ever Eno River State Park Migratory Bird Festival Sept. 18 was a collaborative effort of the park staff, the New Hope Audubon Society, the Eno River Association and Audubon North Carolina.

The 4,210-acre park is considered an Important Bird Area by the Audubon groups, and the event, in part, was to celebrate the state parks system’s “Year of the Birds” interpretive theme.

Festivities began at 7 a.m. with birdwatching hikes led by Curtis Smalling of Audubon and Edith Tatum, a volunteer naturalist at the park. The

perfect weather helped produce more than 50 species of birds in various habitats.

Park staff presented a powerpoint program on the birds of the park and a talk on raptors. Smalling gave a presentation on bird counting, and Superintendent Keith Nealon presented a bird sing-a-long with singing and dance steps that emulated birds.

The day culminated in a presentation of plaques from Audubon North Carolina to the Eno River Association and the state park recognizing both of them as “Important Bird Area Partners.”



SONGS ABOUT BIRDS AND BIRD DANCES WERE PART OF THE FESTIVITIES.



CUTTING THE RIBBON, LEFT TO RIGHT, ARE: REP. MITCH GILLESPIE, PARK SUPERINTENDENT SEAN MCELHONE, JULIE SITTON OF THE GOVERNOR’S WESTERN OFFICE, SEN. JOE SAM QUEEN, KEN HARRIS AND PAUL BRAUN OF THE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE, JUSTICE BOB HUNTER, LEWIS LEDFORD, STATE PARKS DIRECTOR, SUSIE HAMRICK JONES OF THE FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY, AND REP. HUGH BLACKWELL.



LAKE JAMES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tion, Burke County government and Crescent, the land development arm of Duke Energy Corp., which owned most of the shore.

“This is an emotional day for us. It was a very long, uphill battle,” said Ken Harris, a member of the park’s citizens advisory committee.

On what’s now called the Paddy’s Creek section, the new facilities include a bathhouse designed to green building standards, a 700-foot-wide swim beach, picnic grounds and shelter, parking areas for 450 vehicles, a maintenance compound and infrastructure to support further development on the property.

The project represents a \$7.6 million investment by the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

“Opening these facilities is essentially like opening a new state park,” said Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system. “It is a milestone, not only for the state park, but for the community, which played a vital role in the acquisition of the land.”

The park’s center of gravity will gradually shift to the property on the lake’s north shore for Superintendent Sean McElhone and his staff.

A master plan developed in 2005 calls for the eventual construction of a visitor center, campgrounds, a community building, vacation cabins and boating and fishing access as well as a trail system that will connect with regional trails.

The swim beach was the most requested amenity by the community during the master planning process. With the state park being the only public access on the 6,500-acre lake, an existing swim area frequently filled to capacity early on summer mornings.

State Sen. Joe Sam Queen and Rep. Mitch Gillespie attended the ceremony and applauded the nonpartisan support of the land acquisition, which involved legislative approval of certificates of participation to meet the \$18 million sale price, well below the appraised value of \$31 million.

The certificates are being repaid by trust fund revenues over 20 years.

“These kinds of projects don’t just happen,” Gillespie said. “There were many people working on many different levels.

Queen said that approval of the financing plan involved last-minute legislative maneuvering, but that nobody ever suggested that the project was not worthwhile.

“Without vision, people perish, and this is an example of people thriving,” he said.

The bathhouse complex is at the end of a winding, two-mile entrance road that also offers views of the Blue Ridge mountains and Linville Gorge to the west of the property.

The bathhouse is among several state park capital projects built recently to standards of the U.S. Green Building Council through its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

It features a solar system that provides both hot water and space heating, along with low-flow water fixtures and the use of natural lighting.

The designer of the project was Architectural Design Studio of Asheville. General Contractors were Young & McQueen Grading Co. Inc. of Burnsville and Construction Logic Inc. of Hendersonville.

PUBLIC MULLS CARVERS CREEK PLAN

About 50 potential future visitors and the neighbors of Carvers Creek State Park in Cumberland County got their first look in late August at plans for what's to become North Carolina's 36th state park.

Three concepts for a master plan for the state park were unveiled by Susan Hatchell Landscape Architecture of Raleigh, the private firm responsible for completing the plan that will guide initial development.

"This park has tremendous potential for recreation, environmental education and protection of important natural resources," said Lewis Ledford, state parks director. "It's vital that citizens be involved at this stage."

Authorized in 2005, Carvers Creek encompasses 3,330 acres in two principal tracts. About 1,400 acres is the former James Stillman Rockefeller estate near Spring Lake that was a working farm before its donation to The Nature Conservancy.

In June, the conservancy donated the land, with its historic farm buildings, longleaf pine stands and lake to the state park.

The remaining park property, about nine miles to the southeast and bordering Fort Bragg, offers both high-value longleaf pine and wetlands habitats.

To tackle the challenge of weaving non-contiguous tracts into a state park that offers both recreation and natural resource protection, Hatchell initially offered three concepts spanning a range of development.

One concept would offer the lowest intensity of development with two separate park properties and no physical connection. The northwestern tract, called the Sandhills Property would offer only low-intensity recreation such as hiking and fishing.



CONCEPT MAPS DREW CLOSE ATTENTION AT MEETING.

The second proposes the acquisition of 900 additional acres. More historic preservation is envisioned at the farm property and a multi-use trail would tie the two tracts together.

The third option would require up to 3,600 additional acres, including more land linking the tracts as well as property along the Cape Fear River.

All three would offer a visitor center, hiking, picnicking, paddling and fishing access and some form of camping, with tent/trailer camping involved in the medium- and high-intensity development options.

Hatchell said that a final master plan likely will be a hybrid of the three proposed concepts.

Neighbors of the park expressed some concern at the public meeting about the proximity of park facilities and roads to established neighborhoods. Some of the property is now used informally for hiking by area residents.

Written public comments were sought at the meeting and the public was invited to complete an online survey about their preferences for the park.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

2011. But, the state parks system and The Nature Conservancy wanted people in the Cumberland County area to have a chance to celebrate the land and the new park.

"The first time I saw it, the land spoke to me about how much Mr. Rockefeller loved this place," said Rick Studenmund of the conservancy, who was among the first to scout the farm as pre-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

CARVERS CREEK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

mier longleaf pine conservation land.

Studenmund said the farm is part of about 16,000 acres the conservancy has been involved in protecting in the sandhills. The conservancy has planted 370 acres of native grasses on the property and 400 acres of longleaf pines.

Also, the state's Ecosystem Enhancement Program rehabilitated a stream through the property's grasslands.

Rockefeller, a World War II veteran of the 82nd Airborne Corps and at one time, the oldest living Olympic medalist (1924, rowing), was a no-nonsense being that recognized the value of unspoiled land and proudly extended his famous family's contributions to conservation.

Fred Annand of the conservancy said that at 100 years old, Rockefeller decided within a 10-minute conversation to donate the land in his estate.

Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system, told the crowd at the open house that Rockefeller's "altruism and spirit" were in the tradition of other great state parks from Mount Mitchell to Jockey's Ridge.

"We hope to provide that same kind of park setting in Cumberland County," Ledford said. "Help us understand what's needed here and what we can do to continue to make this place special."

MEDOC MOUNTAIN HOSTS OPEN HOUSE

Medoc Mountain State Park hosted an open house Sept. 14 from 5-8 p.m. with about 50 local residents attending to meet the staff and to see firsthand what the park has to offer.

Park staff explained their job duties, demonstrated interpretive and education equipment and displays, conducted tours and discussed the displays inside the visitor center.

Refreshments were served while a local duet, Chamber Grass, provided music on the front lawn.

Park Superintendent Bill Meyer said he was very pleased with the turnout. "We tried very hard to advertise the event to the surrounding community," he said. Along with the park staff, District Superintendent Erik Nygard, the park's advisory committee and Nicole Crider of Kerr Lake State Recreation Area were also on hand.

Sid Shearin, retired superintendent of



ABOUT 200 CAME TO HEAR ABOUT THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF LONG VALLEY FARM. AT RIGHT, FRED ANNAND OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY. BELOW, SUPERINTENDENT JANET PEARSON LEADS A TOUR OF THE FARM.



CHAMBER GRASS ENTERTAINED AT OPEN HOUSE.

Pettigrew State Park, attended representing Friends of State Parks. Shearin answered questions and talked to individuals about forming a local friends group at Medoc Mountain.

CARVERS CREEK

near Fort Bragg in Cumberland County.

The former Rockefeller estate was donated for the state park this summer by The Nature Conservancy, which had, in turn, acquired it when Rockefeller died in 2004. Along with undeveloped land several miles to the southeast, it has become part of the 36th state park.

Modest interim facilities at the farm are likely to be open to the public near the end of

LYNDON SUTTON RETIRES FROM 'CLIFFS'

LYNDON SUTTON RETIRED AS SUPERINTENDENT OF CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE STATE PARK IN AUGUST AFTER 28 YEARS WITH THE DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION. A NATIVE OF SEVEN SPRINGS, SUTTON GRADUATED FROM N.C. WESLEYAN COLLEGE IN ROCKY MOUNT AND BEGAN WORK AS A SEASONAL EMPLOYEE AT CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE WHILE IN COLLEGE. HE WAS A RANGER AT JONES LAKE STATE PARK AND KERR LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA BEFORE A PROMOTION TO SUPERINTENDENT OF MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK IN 1997. HE RETURNED TO CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE IN 2006. AT RIGHT, HE RECEIVES A RETIREMENT PLAQUE FROM MIKE LAMBERT, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS. BELOW RIGHT, SUTTON ENJOYS LISTENING TO THE SPEAKERS.



JEFFREYS ENDS 35-YEAR PARKS CAREER

THE RETIREMENT OF ALAN JEFFREYS AFTER 35 YEARS WITH THE DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION WAS CAUSE FOR A DAYLONG CELEBRATION AT JORDAN LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA COMPLETE WITH AN ARRAY OF ACTIVITIES. JEFFREYS, A NATIVE OF ZEBULON, JOINED THE DIVISION'S DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF IN 1975 AFTER GAINING ASSOCIATE DEGREES IN FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND CIVIL ENGINEERING. HE RETIRED AS A FACILITY ENGINEERING SPECIALIST RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING MANY OF THE STATE PARKS SYSTEM'S CAPITAL PROJECTS OUT OF THE GROUND. HE WAS PRESENTED A DIVISION DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD IN 1988. JEFFREYS WAS PRESENTED A FRAMED PHOTO OF THE OLD MOUNT MITCHELL TOWER FROM BRUCE GARNER, CHIEF OF DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT, RIGHT. BELOW RIGHT, COLLEAGES ENJOY THE PICNIC.



13 NEW RANGERS GET COMMISSIONS

If state parks are getting more recognition than ever, it's due in part to the job that the park rangers do, according to Superior Court Judge Gary E. Trawick, who swore in 13 new rangers at a commissioning ceremony July 1.

Trawick, a veteran judge who often travels to hold court in far-flung counties, said that he always turns off the highway when he spots a state park entrance sign.

"I've never been in a park in this state in which I've not been treated well," he said. "I've never been there that when I left, I didn't know a lot more than when I came."

Trawick was joined in honoring the newly commissioned rangers by Dee Freeman, secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Freeman said that park rangers are the face of state government for many people, and that as law enforcement officers, "you're the difference between what we call civilized society and that which is not."

The 13 rangers were the first to be sworn in 2010.

Receiving a commission as a Special Peace Officer at the end of 17-week basic law enforcement training is generally regarded as the last formal step before a ranger takes on full duties in a unit of the state parks system.

During the training period prior to commissioning, a ranger is assimilated into the park and begins assuming duties in resource management and visitor service.

Freeman recognized three rangers who excelled dur-



NEW RANGERS HEARD PRAISE FOR THEIR PROFESSION FROM DEE FREEMAN, SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE GARY E. TRAWICK.

ing their basic law enforcement training. Top academic awards went to Jarid Church who attended Vance-Granville Community College and Jason Brad Costner who attended Western Piedmont Community College. Renee Tomczak, who attended Craven Community College, received an award for "strongest work ethic."

"It requires a lot of dedication and training for our candidates to earn the right to wear the campaign-style hat of a state park ranger," said Lewis Ledford, state parks director. "These men and women are true multi-specialists who are frequently asked to assume many roles during a day at work."

State park rangers are required to have at least a two-year degree and many come to the job with four-year university degrees in curricula related to resource and/or park management.

Beyond law enforcement training, all are trained in

medical first response, search-and-rescue, wildfire suppression, natural resource management, interpretive skills and environmental education.

The rangers who received commissions are: Michael Lee Annas at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area; Joshua Dean Clawson at Crowders Mountain State Park; Jarid Adam Church at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area; Jason Bradley Costner at South Mountains State Park; Robert Michael McGraw at Lake Norman State Park; Jannon Roy Murr at Morrow Mountain State Park; Ryan Edward Newsome at Medoc Mountain State Park; Andrew Thomas Partin at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area; Charles Stephen Rogers at Pettigrew State Park; Jack Kenneth Singley at William B. Umstead State Park; Eric Bradley Siratt at Lumber River State Park; Renee Anne Tomczak at Hammocks Beach State Park; James Lee Trostle at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area.

\$9.2 MILLION IN LOCAL GRANTS AWARDED

The N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority awarded 32 grants worth \$9.2 million to local governments for parks and recreation projects in the 2009-10 funding cycle.

The final awards were made in July at the authority's quarterly meeting at Raven Rock State Park when 14 grants were announced. The initial round of grant awards for 24 projects took place in May.

Of total trust fund revenues generated by the state's tax on real estate deed transfers, 30 percent is set aside each year for land acquisition and capital projects by towns and counties for recreation projects. Those projects include open space and greenways as well as playgrounds, soccer fields, community centers and other developed facilities.

During this funding cycle, there were 85 applications requesting \$24.4 million.

Interestingly, in 2007 when trust fund revenues were at their peak during a boom in real estate markets, there were 80 applications asking for a similar amount.

Although the recession has cut significantly into trust fund revenues, the demand for grants from the local governments has not waned.

Among the awards, six were for the maximum amount of \$500,000. The local governments must match the grants dollar-for-dollar.

During the authority meeting, Lewis Ledford, state parks director, provided an update on the recently completed 2010 session of the General Assembly and recent activities in the parks system.



ERIN LAWRENCE, A CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER FOR THE STATE PARKS SYSTEM, DISCUSSES CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR THE TRUST FUND AUTHORITY.

"Many state parks systems across the country are seeing significant increases in attendance during these trying economic times and North Carolina is no exception" said Ledford. "It shows that state parks offer an affordable and accessible escape for people."

The state's financial situation has resulted in the elimination of 52 positions in North Carolina state parks, according to Ledford, who said the division will also need to absorb significant operating cuts.

"Just like all other state government agencies, we are being asked to do more with less," he said. "We are all in this together and we are prepared to meet the challenges ahead."

Ledford and authority chairman Bill Ross described their trip to Asheville July 15 for the "Listening Session" on President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative. In April, President Barack Obama launched a new initiative to conserve cherished land and encourage more Americans to enjoy the outdoors.

The president said the America's Great Outdoors program would involve a series

of listening sessions throughout the nation to solicit an array of ideas.

Obama said conservation is an integral part of economic growth, and that his new program will also create jobs. He promised that it won't be a big federal program driven from Washington.

The initiative will be led by the heads of the Environmental Protection Agency, White House Council on Environmental Quality and departments of Agriculture and Interior.

Obama is to receive a report by Nov. 15 outlining an action plan to both reconnect Americans to nature and enhance conservation efforts. Eight departments and the White House Office of Management and Budget are to work with the initiative to "identify existing resources" and to align policies to meet the initiative's goals.

More than 400 individuals came to Asheville to participate in more than 15 breakout sessions to express their views on how such items as what North Carolina is doing to address the outdoor conservation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

RAVEN ROCK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

recreation areas since 1994. The project also includes a picnic shelter, improvements to the picnic grounds, an accessible nature trail and paving of the park's entrance road and parking areas.

It represents an investment of \$4.3 million from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the principal funding source for state park capital projects and land acquisition.

Park Superintendent Kristen Brigner specifically thanked the trust fund authority, which held a quarterly meeting at the center the day before the dedication. Many authority members stayed for the dedication and a tour of the park.

The visitor center was built to comply with standards of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program of the U.S. Green Building Council, with sustainable features such as a geothermal heat pump, solar hot water heating and low-flow fixtures, low-energy lighting fixtures and solar lighting in the parking area.

It also offers the use of natural lighting, local building materials and natural landscaping.

"Nearly 200,000 visitors enjoy this growing state park each year, and this facility will add to their experience," said Lewis Ledford, state parks director. "It's also something of an economic stimulus, if you will, considering the times we are in."

The project represents more than 50,000 man-hours of labor. The structure was designed by LS3P Associates, Ltd. of Raleigh, and general contractor was Harrod and Associates Constructors Inc. of Raleigh. The exhibits were designed

GRANTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

needs of our citizens and how the federal government could aid in those efforts.

During the business meeting, the authority authorized funding reallocations and new funding for land acquisitions at Chimney Rock, New River and Carvers Creek state parks and the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mike Waters, executive director of the N.C. Recreation and Parks Association, explained the mission and role of that organization, and Raven Rock State Park Superintendent Kristen Brigner gave a presentation on the geology and natural and cultural history of the park and the surrounding area in Harnett County.



CUB SCOUT PACK 942 AND BILL ROSS, CHAIRMAN OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND AUTHORITY, PARTNERED TO CUT THE RIBBON.



by Riggs Ward Design of Richmond, Va. and built by Studio Design Inc. of Charlotte.

Museum-quality exhibits in the center's exhibit hall explore the natural history and unique geologic events that resulted in the Raven Rock landscape, along with the history of Cape Fear River navigation and the river's importance to local culture and commerce.

Interactive exhibits invite visitors to consider "Nature Holding the Upper Hand" in efforts to control and profit from such a large river.

The 41-year-old park is named for a riverside escarpment that was long a destination for local picnickers.

The site was always worth visiting, although early visitors went to a great deal more effort to come, said Ledford, who read a short passage from the memoirs of local historian Clara Page:

"Old people tell stories of harnessing the mules and horses to wagons, carts and buggies loaded with family members or friends, and picnic lunches complete with freezers of homemade ice cream packed in sawdust...just to drive to the Raven Rock...to spend a few hours."

SANDHILLS PARTNERSHIP AT 10 YEARS

The North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership celebrated its 10th anniversary – and 10 years of achievements – in September with an open house event for stakeholders at Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve.

There were tours of some of the partnership’s success stories, including conservation lands and restored longleaf pine forests on Fort Bragg.

The state parks system is one of the partners in the effort that began when warnings about the demise of red cockaded woodpecker habitat threatened to curtail training activities on the Army base.

Officials at Fort Bragg and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began to devise an action plan that expanded to include state agencies and local conservation organizations such as the Sandhills Area Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy.

From that beginning, the partnership has:

- Protected more than 16 miles of Fort Bragg boundary.
- Been involved in the creation of Carvers Creek State Park.



DEMONSTRATIONS ON THE TOUR INCLUDED INSTALLING A MANMADE WOODPECKER CAVITY.

- Added more than 3,300 acre to the Sandhills game lands.
 - And, conserved more than 25,000 acres of land in the region.
- Collectively, the partners are using prescribed fire on more than 88,000 acres of longleaf pine each year, and have planted more than 350,000 longleaf pine seedlings.
- The base’s plan for recovery of the woodpecker habitat was achieved more than six years ahead of schedule.

VOLUNTEERING...

FOR THE SECOND YEAR, A GROUP OF AMERICORPS VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE STATE PARKS WHILE LIVING IN THE CAMPGROUNDS AND BARRACKS. THEY WORKED AT SIX PARKS OVER A SIX-WEEK PERIOD IMPROVING TRAILS AND REMOVING INVASIVE SPECIES.



FIFTEEN EMPLOYEES REPRESENTING 10 DIVISIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES SPENT A DAY AT CAROLINA BEACH STATE PARK REMOVING TRASH FROM A DEPRESSION POND. THEY VOLUNTEERED USING COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS THAT THE STATE GRANTS TO ITS EMPLOYEES.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS

MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT

AUGUST, 2010

NC STATE PARK	September 2010	TOTAL YTD Sep-10	September 2009	TOTAL YTD Sep-09	% CHANGE (2010/2009) Sep YTD	
Carolina Beach	47,584	371,082	45,540	403,136	4%	-8%
Carvers Creek	0	0	0	0	-100%	-100%
Chimney Rock	21,385	162,035	16,584	157,235	29%	3%
Cliffs of the Neuse	25,319	164,786	18,354	154,317	38%	7%
Crowders Mountain	37,601	296,881	33,800	463,429	11%	-36%
Dismal Swamp	4,461	43,928	5,580	39,285	-20%	12%
Elk Knob	3,054	17,965	4,582	16,138	-33%	11%
Eno River including Oconeechee Mountain	45,969	365,325	37,047	319,917	24%	14%
Falls Lake	93,413	724,012	92,097	879,979	1%	-18%
Fort Fisher	70,590	738,385	55,845	672,134	26%	10%
Fort Macon	120,876	1,141,058	100,916	1,213,586	20%	-6%
Goose Creek	24,364	228,606	16,173	160,394	51%	43%
Gorges	7,164	58,182	6,816	49,778	5%	17%
Grandfather Mountain	0	8,349	220	2,148	-100%	289%
Hammocks Beach	5,978	56,769	10,964	102,718	-45%	-45%
Haw River	2,486	18,972	1,770	17,315	40%	10%
Hanging Rock	56,799	425,335	32,246	326,735	76%	30%
Jones Lake	0	35,274	4,782	47,653	-100%	-26%
Jordan Lake	133,688	816,658	102,512	1,078,596	30%	-24%
Jockey’s Ridge	146,595	1,284,553	140,904	1,259,275	4%	2%
Kerr Lake	105,967	890,262	110,052	1,031,488	-4%	-14%
Lake James	44,041	248,769	26,388	331,655	67%	-25%
Lake Norman	48,147	429,252	44,244	422,964	9%	1%
Lake Waccamaw	6,788	76,510	7,392	76,998	-8%	-1%
Lumber River	8,396	76,490	10,032	75,132	-16%	2%
Mayo River	3,866	30,635	0	0	-100%	-100%
Merchants Millpond	21,356	179,703	16,380	162,234	30%	11%
Medoc Mountain	6,907	43,081	5,550	48,169	24%	-11%
Mount Mitchell	43,696	251,734	46,813	238,723	-7%	5%
Morrow Mountain	32,824	291,054	37,440	324,916	-12%	-10%
New River including Mount Jefferson	40,524	291,012	27,670	223,566	46%	30%
Pettigrew	7,112	59,942	4,348	44,882	64%	34%
Pilot Mountain	40,723	339,425	46,253	368,549	-12%	-8%
Raven Rock	16,384	121,714	18,073	139,247	-9%	-13%
Singletary Lake	1,983	22,670	2,751	20,170	-28%	12%
South Mountains	22,484	177,218	17,272	150,982	30%	17%
Stone Mountain	42,472	342,040	40,344	345,896	5%	-1%
Weymouth Woods	4,873	38,965	3,623	36,677	35%	6%
William B. Umstead	84,607	678,522	76,935	556,415	10%	22%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	1,430,476	11,547,153	1,268,292	11,962,431	13%	-3%



Our Mission Remains...

to protect North Carolina's **natural diversity**;
to provide and promote **outdoor recreation**
opportunities throughout North Carolina;
to exemplify and encourage **good stewardship**
of North Carolina's natural resources for all
citizens and visitors.

*8,000 copies of this public document were printed
at a cost of \$562.00 or \$0.07 per copy.*

SAFETY ZONE

DRIVING SAFELY AT RR CROSSINGS

✓In the U.S. trains collide with a person or vehicle about every two hours, usually within 25 miles of the victim's home.

✓Keep in mind that at 30 mph, a 100-car freight train takes 2/3 of a mile to stop.

✓Cross tracks only at designated crossings and observe all warning signs and signals.

✓Never drive around lowered gates -- it's illegal and deadly. if you suspect a malfunctioning gate, call 911.

The Steward
NC Division of Parks and Recreation
Public Information Office
1615 MSC
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615

